HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

No. 2

Human Rights Education and Human Rights Treaties

UNITED NATIONS

World Campaign for Human Rights

HR/PUB/DECADE/1999/I

Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights

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Introduction

1. The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education was proclaimed in December 1994 by the General Assembly, spanning the period 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2004. In accordance with the relevant provisions of international human rights instruments, and for the purposes of the Decade, human rights education has been defined as training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes, which are directed towards:

(*a*) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(*b*) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;

(*c*) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups;

(*d*) The enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society;

(*e*) The furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. Coordination of the implementation of the **international Plan of Action for the Decade** throughout the United Nations system was entrusted to the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Plan of Action has five objectives:

- Assessing needs and formulating strategies;
- Building and strengthening human rights education programmes at international, regional, national and local level;
- Developing and coordinating the development of human rights education materials;
- Strengthening the role of the mass media;
- Promoting the global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. The Plan focuses on stimulating and supporting national and local activities and initiatives in partnership with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, individuals and broad sectors of civil society.

4. At the **national level**, the Plan of Action provides for the establishment, on the initiative of Governments or other relevant institutions, of a national committee for human rights education. Those committees should include a broad coalition of governmental and non-governmental actors with responsibility for developing and implementing a comprehensive (in terms of outreach), effective (in terms of educational strategies) and long-term sustainable **national plan of action for human rights education**,[1] with the assistance of Governments and international donors and programmes. The national plan should encompass all levels of society, through the provision of formal and non-formal education, specialized educational and training programmes for vulnerable groups, professional and other groups most likely to affect human rights advocacy as well as those entrusted with upholding human rights.

5. Accordingly, national human rights education programmes and initiatives may target:

- The general public, at all levels of literacy and education, to ensure that they are informed of their rights and responsibilities under international human rights instruments;

- Vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, minorities, refugees, indigenous peoples, the poverty-stricken, persons with HIV infections or AIDS;

- The police, prison officials, lawyers, judges, teachers and curriculum developers, the armed forces, development officers, international civil servants, the media, government officials, parliamentarians and other groups particularly well placed to ensure the realization of human rights;

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[1] See, in this regard, the "Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education" (United Nations document A/52/469/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1), developed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The guidelines include a set of principles for effective human rights education and propose a strategy for the establishment of a national plan:

- Establishing a national committee;
- Conducting a baseline/needs assessment study;
- Setting priorities and identifying groups in need;
- Developing the Plan;
- Implementing the Plan;
- Reviewing and revising the Plan.

- Schools, universities, professional and vocational training programmes and institutions which should be encouraged and assisted in developing human rights curricula and corresponding teaching and resource materials for incorporation into formal education at the early childhood, primary, secondary, post-secondary and adult education levels;

- Appropriate institutions of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, workers' and employers' organizations, labour unions, the mass media, religious organizations, community organizations, the family, resource and training centres and other institutions which, for the purpose of incorporating human rights education into non-formal programmes, should be encouraged and assisted in developing and delivering such non-formal programmes.

6. **Treaty bodies** are a natural vehicle for the implementation of the Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. Their principal function is to monitor the national application by States parties of the respective human rights treaties, including the provisions relating to human rights education. Accordingly, they maintain direct contact with States parties and encourage an atmosphere of constructive dialogue with Government representatives. To date, six treaty bodies have been established to monitor the following treaties: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

7. The international Plan of Action for the Decade envisages that "United Nations human rights treaty-monitoring bodies [...] shall, in the course of their mandated functions during the Decade, encourage the furtherance of human rights education, including through appropriate recommendations to States, to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to others involved in human rights education" (para. 16).

8. Resolutions of the General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights have also called upon the human rights treaty bodies to support the efforts of the High Commissioner in the implementation of the Plan of Action and have drawn attention to the international obligation of State parties to the treaties to promote human rights education. More particularly, in the resolution adopted at its 52nd session, the General Assembly encouraged "the human rights treaty bodies to place emphasis, when examining reports of States parties, on obligations of States parties in the area of human rights education and information and to reflect this emphasis in their concluding observations" (resolution 52/127 of 12 December 1997).

9. The **present document** has been prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as a means of assessing the contribution of the treaty bodies to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade for Human Rights Education. A preliminary version of this document was presented to the eighth meeting of Chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies in September 1997 (in HRI/MC/1997/Misc.3).

10. Section I introduces a compilation of provisions relative to human rights education in the main human rights treaties and portions of reporting guidelines, general comments and recommendations concerning human rights education, training and information adopted by treaty bodies.

11. Section II provides an assessment of the information relating to human rights education contained in State party reports to the six treaty bodies, its relevance in respect of the objectives of the Plan of Action and the contribution of the corresponding concluding observations and recommendations of treaty bodies to the implementation of the Plan of Action.

12. Section III sets out some suggestions for action on the part of treaty bodies in the light of the information gathered, as a further contribution to the Decade.

13. The State party reports reviewed in the present study were examined by treaty bodies between August 1996 and January 1997.

Part I

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

14. Several human rights treaties contain specific provisions relative to human rights education; in addition, some treaty bodies have elaborated reporting guidelines, general comments or recommendations concerning human rights education, training and information. A compilation of those provisions and documents follows.

A. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Preamble

The States Parties to the present Covenant, [...]

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

Agree upon the following articles: [...]

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures. [...]

General Comment 3 (Adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the fifth session, 1990) on the nature of States parties obligations (art. 2, para. 1 of the Covenant)

[...]

7. Other measures which may also be considered "appropriate" for the purposes of article 2 (1) include, but are not limited to, administrative, financial, educational and social measures. [...].

Article 13

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the rights of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. [...].

Revised guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports to be submitted by States parties under articles 16 and 17 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/C.12/1991/1)

[...]

Article 13 of the Covenant

2. What difficulties have you encountered in the realization of the right to education, as spelt out in paragraph 1? What time-related goals and benchmarks has your Government set in this respect? [...]

9. Please indicate the role of international assistance in the full realization of the right enshrined in article 13. [...].

B. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Preamble

The States Parties to the present Covenant, [...]

Considering the obligation of States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms,

Realizing that the individual, having duties to other individuals and to the community to which he belongs, is under a responsibility to strive for the promotion and observance of the rights recognized in the present Covenant,

Agree upon the following articles: [...]

Article 2

1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the

rights recognized in the present Covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

2. Where not already provided for by existing legislative or other measures, each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take the necessary steps, in accordance with its constitutional processes and with the provisions of the present Covenant, to adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to give effect to the rights recognized in the present Covenant. [...].

General Comment 3 (Adopted by the Human Rights Committee at its thirteenth session, 1981) on article 2: Implementation at the national level

[...]

2. [...] it is very important that individuals should know what their rights under the Covenant (and the Optional Protocol, as the case may be) are and also that all administrative and judicial authorities should be aware of the obligations which the State party has assumed under the Covenant. To this end, the Covenant should be publicized in all official languages of the State and steps should be taken to familiarize the authorities concerned with its contents as part of their training. [...].

C. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Article 2

1. States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races [...].

Article 7

States Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups, as well as to propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and this Convention.

General guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports to be submitted by States parties under article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention (CERD/C/70/Rev.3)

Article 7

[...] Information on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which give effect to the provisions of article 7 of the Convention, to General Recommendation V of 13 April 1977 and to decision 2 (XXV) of 17 March 1982, by which the Committee adopted its additional guidelines for the implementation of article 7.

In particular, the reports should provide as much information as possible on each of the main subjects mentioned in article 7 under the following separate headings:

A. Education and teaching;

B. Culture;

C. Information.

Within these broad parameters, the information provided should reflect the measures taken by the States parties:

1. To combat prejudices which lead to racial discrimination;

2. To promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial and ethnic groups.

A. *Education and teaching*

This part should describe legislative and administrative measures, including some general information on the educational system, taken in the field of education and teaching to combat racial prejudices which lead to racial discrimination. It should indicate whether any steps have been taken to include in school curricula and in the training of teachers and other professionals, programmes and subjects to help promote human rights issues which would lead to better understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial and ethnic groups. It should also provide information on whether the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are included in education and teaching.

B. *Culture*

Information should be provided in this part of the report on the role of institutions or associations working to develop national culture and traditions, to combat racial prejudices and to promote intra-national and intra-cultural understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial and ethnic groups. Information should also be included on the work of solidarity committees or United Nations Associations to combat racism and racial discrimination and the observance by States parties of Human Rights Days or campaigns against racism and apartheid.

C. *Information*

This part should provide information:

(*a*) On the role of State media in the dissemination of information to combat racial prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to inculcate better understanding of the purposes and principles of the above-mentioned instruments;

(*b*) On the role of the mass information media, i.e. the press, radio and television, in the publicizing of human rights and disseminating information on the purposes and principles of the above-mentioned human rights instruments; [...]

General Recommendation V (Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its fifteenth session, 1977)

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,

Bearing in mind the provisions of articles 7 and 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,

Convinced that combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination, promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial and ethnic groups, and propagating the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and of the human rights declarations and other relevant instruments adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, are important and effective means of eliminating racial discrimination,

Considering that the obligations under article 7 of the Convention, which are binding on all States parties, must be fulfilled by them, including States which declare that racial discrimination is not practised on the territories under their jurisdiction, and that therefore all States parties are required to include information on their implementation of the provisions of that article in the reports they submit in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention,

Noting with regret that few States parties have included, in the reports they have submitted in accordance with article 9 of the Convention, information on the measures which they have adopted and which give effect to the provisions of article 7 of the Convention, and that information has often been general and perfunctory,

Recalling that, in accordance with article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention, the Committee may request further information from the States parties,

1. *Requests* every State party which has not already done so to include—in the next report it will submit in accordance with article 9 of the Convention, or in a special report before its next periodic report becomes due—adequate information on the measures which it has adopted and which give effect to the provisions of article 7 of the Convention;

2. *Invites* the attention of States parties to the fact that, in accordance with article 7 of the Convention, the information to which the preceding paragraph refers should include information on the "immediate and effective measures" which they have adopted, "in the fields of teaching, education, culture and information", with a view to:

(*a*) "Combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination";

(*b*) "Promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical groups";

(*c*) "Propagating the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" as well as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

General Recommendation XIII (Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its forty-second session, 1993) on the training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights

1. In accordance with article 2, paragraph 1, of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, States parties have undertaken that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, will not engage in any practice of racial discrimination; further, States parties have undertaken to guarantee the rights listed in article 5 of the Convention to everyone without distinction as to race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

2. The fulfilment of these obligations very much depends upon national law enforcement officials who exercise police powers, especially the powers of detention or arrest, and upon whether they are properly informed about

the obligations their State has entered into under the Convention. Law enforcement officials should receive intensive training to ensure that in the performance of their duties they respect as well as protect human dignity and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons without distinction as to race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

3. In the implementation of article 7 of the Convention, the Committee calls upon States parties to review and improve the training of law enforcement officials so that the standards of the Convention as well as the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (1979) are fully implemented. They should also include respective information thereupon in their periodic reports.

D. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Article 2

Each State Party shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction. [...].

Article 10

1. Each State Party shall ensure that education and information regarding the prohibition against torture are fully included in the training of law enforcement personnel, civil or military, medical personnel, public officials and other persons who may be involved in the custody, interrogation or treatment of any individual subjected to any form of arrest, detention or imprisonment.

2. Each State Party shall include this prohibition in the rules or instructions issued in regard to the duties and functions of any such person.

E. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women, and, to this end, undertake:

(*a*) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle; [...]

(*f*) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women; [...].

Article 10

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on the basis of equality of men and women: [...]

(*c*) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods; [...].

General Recommendation No. 3 (Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its sixth session, 1987)

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Considering that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has considered 34 reports from States parties since 1983,

Further considering that, although the reports have come from States with different levels of development, they present features in varying degrees showing the existence of stereotyped conceptions of women, owing to socio-cultural factors, that perpetuate discrimination based on sex and hinder the implementation of article 5 of the Convention,

Urges all States parties effectively to adopt education and public information programmes, which will help eliminate prejudices and current practices that hinder the full operation of the principle of the social equality of women.

General Recommendation No. 6 (Adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women at its seventh session, 1988) on effective national machinery and publicity

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

Having considered the reports of States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Noting United Nations General Assembly resolution 42/60 of 30 November 1987,

Recommends that States parties:

1. Establish and/or strengthen effective national machinery, institutions and procedures, at a high level of Government, and with adequate resources, commitment and authority to:

(*a*) Advise on the impact on women of all government policies;

(*b*) Monitor the situation of women comprehensively;

(*c*) Help formulate new policies and effectively carry out strategies and measures to eliminate discrimination;

2. Take appropriate steps to ensure the dissemination of the Convention, the reports of the States parties under article 18 and the reports of the Committee in the language of the States concerned;

3. Seek the assistance of the Secretary-General and the Department of Public Information in providing translations of the Convention and the reports of the Committee;

4. Include in their initial and periodic reports the action taken in respect of this recommendation.

F. Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

(*a*) Encourage mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;

(*b*) Encourage international cooperation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources; [...].

Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child. [...].

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

(*a*) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

(*b*) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

(*c*) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate and for civilizations different from his or her own;

(*d*) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

(*e*) The development of respect for the natural environment. [...].

General guidelines regarding the form and contents of reports to be submitted by States parties under Article 44, paragraph 1 (b), *of the Convention* (CRC/C/58)

[...]

22. In addition, States are requested to describe the measures that have been taken or are foreseen, pursuant to **article 42** of the Convention, to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike. In this regard, reports should also indicate:

The extent to which the Convention has been translated into the national, local, minority or indigenous languages. In this connection, an indication should be given of the number of languages into which the Convention has been translated and the number of copies translated into the minority languages during the reporting period;

Whether the Convention has been translated and has been made available in the languages spoken by the larger refugee and immigrant groups in the country concerned;

The measures adopted to publicize the Convention and create widespread awareness of its principles and provisions. In this connection, an indication should be given of the number of meetings (such as parliamentary or governmental conferences, workshops, seminars) held, the number of programmes broadcast on radio or television and the number of publications issued explaining the Convention on the Rights of the Child during the reporting period;

The specific steps taken to make the Convention widely known to children and the extent to which it has been reflected in the school curricula and considered in parents' education campaigns. An indication should be given of the number of copies of the Convention distributed in the educational system and to the public at large during the reporting period;

The measures adopted to provide education on the Convention to public officials, as well as to train professional groups working with and for children, such as teachers, law enforcement officials, including police, immigration officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, defence forces, medical doctors, health workers and social workers;

The extent to which the principles and provisions of the Convention have been incorporated in professional training curricula and codes of conduct or regulations;

The steps taken to promote understanding of the principles and provisions of the Convention by the mass media and by information and publishing agencies;

The involvement of non-governmental organizations in awareness and advocacy campaigns on the Convention, as well as any support provided to them. In this connection, an indication should be given of the number of non-governmental organizations who participated in such events during the reporting period;

The participation of children in any of these activities.

23. States are also requested to describe the measures undertaken or foreseen, pursuant to **article 44, paragraph 6**, to make their reports widely available to the public at large in their own countries. In this regard, please indicate:

The process of preparation of the present report, in particular the extent to which governmental departments, at the central, regional and local levels, and where appropriate, at the federal and provincial levels, participated, and non-governmental organizations were involved. An indication should also be given of the number of non-governmental organizations which participated in the preparation of the report;

The steps taken to publicize the report, to translate and disseminate it in the national, local, minority or indigenous languages. An indication should be given of the number of meetings (such as parliamentary and governmental conferences, workshops, seminars) held, the number of programmes broadcast on radio or television, the number of publications issued explaining the report and the number of non–governmental organizations which participated in such events during the reporting period;

The measures adopted or foreseen to ensure wide dissemination and consideration of the summary records and the concluding observations adopted by the Committee in relation to the State party's report, including any parliamentary hearing or media coverage. Please indicate the events undertaken to publicize the concluding observations and summary records of the previous report, including the number of meetings (such as parliamentary or governmental conferences, workshops, seminars) held, the number of programmes broadcast on radio or television, the number of publications issued explaining the concluding observations and summary records, and the number of non-governmental organizations which participated in such events during the reporting period.

G. All treaties

Guidelines for the preparation of the initial parts of the State party reports ("Core Documents") under the various international human rights instruments (HRI/CORE/1)

[...]

Information and publicity

4. This section should indicate whether any special efforts have been made to promote awareness among the public and the relevant authorities of the rights contained in the various human rights instruments. The topics to be addressed should include the manner and extent to which the texts of the various human rights instruments have been disseminated, whether such texts have been translated into the local language or languages, what government agencies have responsibility for preparing reports and whether they normally receive information or other inputs from external sources, and whether the contents of the reports are the subject of public debate.

Part II

ANALYSIS OF STATE REPORTS AND CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

15. In the light of resource constraints, the State party reports and concluding observations selected for this study are limited to one session of most of the treaty bodies. Although this time-frame is too narrow to allow definitive conclusions to be drawn, the results of this exercise would tend to indicate that the treatment of human rights education by the treaty bodies varies considerably from one treaty body to another.

16. It is noteworthy that substantial information on national initiatives to promote human rights education has been submitted to the treaty bodies, particularly in the case of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which, in their guidelines on reporting, specifically request information on the efforts of States to promote human rights education (see section I). In contrast, information submitted to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on article 13 may, but does not systematically, contain indications on efforts relating to human rights education.

17. In their examination of State reports, treaty bodies normally address only a few of the target groups mentioned in the Plan of Action. When Governments report on measures taken, they are rarely requested to provide an evaluation of the impact of those measures (except for the Committee on the Rights of the Child) or to identify, as an initial step, any gaps in existing programmes for human rights education. Reference to the proclamation of the Decade for Human Rights Education and to special efforts undertaken in this framework is made only by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

A. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

18. Of the four reports to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) reviewed, only one (Hong Kong) details at length the human rights components in the formal educational setting; as far as other target audiences are concerned, the report refers to the Government's submission under another treaty (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

19. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights would appear to make systematic reference to the publication of State reports and of the Committee's recommendations and often expresses concern in instances where it is felt that the rights in question are not sufficiently well known (for example, the concluding observations on Finland and Portugal/Macao). The concluding recommendations of the Committee for educational programmes in human rights appear to target officials involved in the administration of justice, particularly lawyers and judges, but rarely other professionals involved in matters relative to economic, social and cultural rights, namely social workers, medical personnel and government officials dealing with development or economic planning.

B. Human Rights Committee

20. In general, human rights education does not appear to be a major focus of attention in State party reports submitted to the Human Rights Committee (HRC). Of the six reports reviewed, several reports call attention to measures taken to establish national human rights institutions or centres to disseminate information or develop training programmes for legal or other professionals (Denmark, Gabon and Switzerland). It is worth noting that Gabon appeals to the international community and the United Nations specialized agencies to establish a global training programme for law enforcement professionals. In its report, Peru stated that human rights training was part of its national pacification efforts and referred to training being provided to members of the armed forces and national police serving in areas declared to be under a state of emergency.

21. The concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee are varied in their content. Specialized training programmes are often recommended to members of the legal and law enforcement professions. Particular areas of concern are sometimes identified in relation to human rights education: with regard to Germany, the Committee calls attention to the need for education against racism; with regard to Switzerland, additional educational measures are suggested with respect to gender equality; with regard to Peru, the Committee recommended education programmes for children and the community aimed at promoting thorough understanding of the principles of human rights and tolerance and their role in a sound and stable democracy. Despite the absence of reference in most State party reports to broad-based national programmes for human rights education, more comprehensive education programmes are advised by the Committee only in the case of Gabon, in connection with the United Nations Technical Cooperation Programme in the Field of Human Rights administered by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

C. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

22. Several reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) contain a volume of information on national initiatives for human rights education. Many focus on the importance of using the mass media as a means of offsetting negative images. Reference is made to policies and legal measures concerning the media which emphasize the duty of the authorities to ban racial discrimination (People's Republic of China, India), to enhance racial integration (Brazil and Venezuela) and to provide legal remedies to racial discrimination (Malta). India, in particular, reports that guidelines have been developed for the media to ensure that racial or other

prejudices are not propagated; guidelines for the privately-funded media were developed by the Press Council of India and those for the State-run media by the Government.

23. Specific initiatives include the organization of workshops and seminars, the celebration of commemorative days, the organization of school competitions and the development of syllabi, curricula and other teaching materials on the subject of racial discrimination. These initiatives focus essentially on the formal education sector, with particular emphasis on teaching staff, university students and schoolchildren. Two Governments report that human rights education is a State duty under their Constitution (Democratic Republic of Congo and Venezuela); in one case, the Constitution provides for the dissemination of, and information on, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and all duly ratified international human rights instruments, and for the State's obligation to include human rights in all training programmes for schools, the armed forces and security services (Democratic Republic of Congo).

24. Namibia provides information on the type of activities called for in the Plan of Action, although not in the comprehensive manner proposed in the Plan. A cross-ministerial National Committee for Civic Education to identify problem areas of racial discrimination has been created with a membership which includes governmental organizations as well as private institutions from civil society. Another Government (Mauritius) highlights the contribution of and need for cooperation with non-governmental organizations.[2]

25. The concluding observations of the Committee are relatively comprehensive with respect to target audiences. Most concluding observations contain recommendations which place emphasis on the need to increase initiatives for the implementation of article 7 of the Convention, particularly in relation to the revision of school curricula and the training of public officials; the need to develop more programmes and campaigns to foster human rights is also emphasized (Bolivia, Brazil and Malta). In what might be termed an interesting conclusion in response to Brazil's report, the Committee points to a need for designing indicators to evaluate human rights education programmes addressed to vulnerable persons.

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[2] Two States parties whose reports are not among those examined by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its 49th session are Guatemala and Panama. These reports place special emphasis on international cooperation and funding for the development of extensive programmes in human rights education. Panama reports that, through international funding and with the cooperation of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, UNESCO and DANIDA, it has developed a comprehensive national plan of action for human rights education which includes: a survey on the state of human rights education in schools, revision of textbooks, training of teachers, establishment both of a network of human rights trainers and of a National Commission to Promote Human Rights Education and Learning.

D. Committee against Torture

26. The reports to the Committee against Torture (CAT) refer, in general, to educating potential violators with regard to the Convention against Torture; no reference is made to specific education initiatives addressed to potential victims of such violations. A few States parties have reported on more general human rights education programmes (Republic of Korea and Uruguay). Some highlight technical cooperation programmes in human rights education being undertaken jointly with international organizations (Georgia and Uruguay).

27. In its concluding observations, the Committee against Torture consistently recommends that States parties publish the text of the Convention in their official journals, if they have not yet done so. In several cases, the Committee has found that States parties need to develop or strengthen training programmes for professional groups involved in the administration of justice or, in the case of medical personnel, in the prevention or detection of instances of torture (art. 10.1 of the Convention). No references have been found which encourage States parties to include the prohibition of torture in the rules or instructions issued in regard to the duties and functions of any such person (art. 10.2).

28. Generally, information is not requested from States parties on the level of educational activities undertaken to promote knowledge within the general population of the contents of the Convention. In one case, the Committee referred to the education of the general public and, notably, of a vulnerable group (Russian Federation) by recommending the adoption of programmes to inform detainees and the public of their rights and the means available under the law for their protection.

E. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

29. In their reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), States demonstrate an awareness of the fact that a gender sensitive and egalitarian society begins with the education of young children and their educators (parents and teachers). Several reports make reference to the need to eliminate stereotypes in domestic life (the Philippines, Slovenia and Turkey). For instance, Slovenia has developed a National Programme for Households to help young women and men to share family responsibilities in a non-stereotyped way. Slovenia is also taking steps to diminish the discriminatory representation of women through textbook drawings and even in the written and spoken language. Similar initiatives by other States include the review or revision of textbooks and curricula of primary

schools, the organization of workshops and the involvement of the media (Canada, Morocco and the Philippines).

30. Comprehensive plans of action for the rights of women, including a broad education component, have been developed by Canada and the Philippines; Turkey reports that a plan of action is being developed in cooperation with UNDP. Special attention is often given to marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as prostitutes, overseas workers and other women or children vulnerable to exploitation. Turkey is expanding the number of women's centres throughout the country, up to and including university level, to conduct research on and training in women's rights. Denmark reports that its Council for Equal Conditions has initiated a two-year project on the theme of equality in primary schools, aimed at collecting experiences gained in schools and in the training of educators; the Council recognized that male and female students displayed differences in skills and interests and at the same time attitudes needed to change in order to achieve equal treatment towards both sexes. Denmark has also developed an optional pre-university course in gender and culture.

31. The concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reflected a general need to improve gender equality in society. Recommendations focused on the improvement of media programmes and curricula to counteract hidden gender-stereotype messages (Slovenia and Venezuela) and also addressed the need to devote special efforts to the education of vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women in rural areas, ethnic minorities, young women and women in prison (Turkey). In the case of Denmark, the Committee recommended that the above-mentioned course on gender and culture be made compulsory in secondary education.

F. Committee on the Rights of the Child

32. The reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) focus mainly on human rights education in schools and public information campaigns (Nigeria and Uruguay). Most reports present the efforts of the Government to promote healthy moral and philosophical development in children, *inter alia*, through human rights education. Relevant programmes are being developed by existing institutions, such as human rights commissions (New Zealand) or ministries (Morocco), or by institutions created ad hoc for the implementation of the Convention (such as the National Child Rights Implementation Committee in Nigeria) or for the enhancement of human rights education (such as the Human Rights Education Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education in Hong Kong, created in 1992 to promote general public understanding and respect for human rights). Educational programmes to combat discrimination against the disabled have also

been developed (Hong Kong). References to other human rights education initiatives are vague (Bulgaria and Panama); in this regard, the report of Panama to CRC contrasts with its report to CERD, which contains extensive information on its national plan of action for human rights education.

33. The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child are comprehensive and specific in respect of potential target audiences, including vulnerable and marginalized groups and relevant professional groups; they consistently identify the lack of education initiatives as a principal subject of concern and make recommendations to remedy this. The Committee consistently recommends that States publish and disseminate the report and the concluding observations; it also raises the issue of evaluating the effectiveness of human rights education and public awareness programmes which have been developed (Hong Kong and Nigeria). The Committee also makes specific reference to the Decade for Human Rights Education (Nigeria and Panama).

G. Government approaches to human rights education

34. State reports illustrate considerable variation in approaches to human rights education.

35. Many States consider human rights education as an almost exclusive concern of the formal education system: human rights education is provided through the inclusion of human rights topics in the curricula and the revision of textbooks in schools, in the organization of university courses and conferences, and in other more participatory activities (such as school essay writing and painting competitions in Hong Kong).

36. Training programmes and seminars for specific groups—professional groups are a case in point—are often mentioned. Focal points and specific institutions in charge of these programmes are referred to less frequently.

37. Some countries attempt to promote general awareness of human rights by holding regular commemorative events such as the Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week (report of the Republic of Korea to CAT) and the Day of the African Child (Nigeria's report to CRC). Production and dissemination of public information materials are frequently cited; these vary from leaflets and academic journals to educational videos. Production and broadcasting of television programmes are also reported (see, for instance, the reports of Morocco and Uruguay to CRC). Burkina Faso refers to the organization of a film festival to combat racial discrimination.

38. As opposed to teaching the importance of not practising discrimination against others, Brazil has chosen the more positive approach of celebrating the contributions of black persons to Brazilian society and culture and

promotes social integration through the mass media (report to CERD). The country tries to ensure that the image of its black nationals is present in the mass media by encouraging the inclusion of black persons in television productions, films and advertisements, and has instituted a national holiday to commemorate the hero of the black resistance against the oppression of seventeenth century slave-based society.

39. Other creative approaches to human rights education include the promotion of community work and extracurricular activities for students. The Republic of Korea reports that college students organized summer legal service activities to inform and educate residents of small cities, farming and fishing villages with regard to the provisions of the Convention against Torture (report to CAT). In Hong Kong, innovative linkages between schools have promoted integration among students. For instance, under the "sister school scheme", ordinary schools are paired with schools for the disabled and the "pick your friend" scheme encourages able-bodied children to befriend disabled children (report to CESCR).[3]

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[3] Also, Botswana, in its report CERD/C/105/Add.1 (which is not among those examined during the CERD session under reference), reported the establishment of a form of national service through which persons may perform national service in rural areas. By facilitating exchanges between persons from different backgrounds, this programme encourages cultural understanding.

Part III

CONCLUSION

40. All treaty bodies have declared that if persons are to seek protection of their own rights, they must become aware of what constitutes these rights. As affirmed by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[4] human rights education is itself a human right. The brief analysis above points to the marked discrepancies in the extent of the information being provided by States parties on human rights education, as well as the inconsistencies in the recommendations being made by treaty bodies in examining that information.

41. Government policies towards human rights education are indicative of the seriousness with which States approach the question of human rights. As mentioned in the introduction to this document, within the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) each country has been called upon to elaborate and implement comprehensive (in terms of outreach), effective (in terms of educational strategies) and long-term sustainable national plans of action for human rights education. Those plans should address all levels of society, through formal and non-formal education and through specialized educational and training programmes for vulnerable persons, professional groups and others most likely to affect human rights advocacy as well as those entrusted with upholding human rights. A Government will often need to adopt a variety of approaches to human rights education to reach those different target audiences.

42. It is incumbent on treaty bodies to emphasize States parties' obligations in this area, particularly during the Decade. Detailed information on steps undertaken should be provided by States parties and should be actively sought by treaty bodies. Inadequacies in existing programmes in addressing priority target audiences should consistently be identified as an area of concern. Treaty bodies could take guidance from the *United Nations Guidelines for National Plans of Action for Human Rights Education*[5] with respect to recommendations in this area.

43. In addition, treaty bodies could perform an important "clearing house" role by sharing with Governments approaches and strategies that have proven to be successful elsewhere and by keeping the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights informed of these developments.

44. It is now opportune for treaty bodies to strengthen their monitoring roles with respect to human rights education. 1998 marked the 50th anniversary

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[4] During its Day of General Discussion on human rights education and public information activities relating to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (5 December 1994, E/1996/2, para. 324).

[5] United Nations document A/52/469/Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1; see the Introduction.

of a historic legal instrument that has served as the basis of the international human rights treaty system, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Closer and more consistent attention to human rights education by the treaty bodies would contribute significantly to promoting awareness of the rights contained in the Universal Declaration and to the commemoration of its 50th anniversary.

ANNEX

List of State party reports and the corresponding concluding observations reviewed

The State party reports and corresponding concluding observations reviewed for the present document are set out below.

A. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (*15th session, December 1996*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Belarus	E/1994/104/Add.6	E/C.12/1/Add.7/Rev.1
Dominican Republic	E/1990/6/Add.7	E/C.12/1/Add.6
Finland	E/1994/104/Add.7	E/C.12/1/Add.8
Portugal (Macao)	E/1990/6/Add.8	E/C.12/1/Add.9
United Kingdom (Hong Kong)	E/1994/104/Add.10	E/C.12/1/Add.10

B. Human Rights Committee (*58th session, November 1996*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Denmark	CCPR/C/64/Add.11	CCPR/C/79/Add.68
Gabon	CCPR/C/31/Add.4	CCPR/C/79/Add.71
Germany	CCPR/C/84/Add.5	CCPR/C/79/Add.73
Peru	CCPR/C/83/Add.1	CCPR/C/79/Add.67 and 72
Switzerland	CCPR/C/81/Add.8	CCPR/C/79/Add.70
United Kingdom (Hong Kong)	CCPR/C/117	CCPR/C/79/Add.69

C. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (*49th session, August 1996*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Bolivia	CERD/C/281/Add.1	CERD/C/304/Add.10
Brazil	CERD/C/263/Add.10	CERD/C/304/Add.11
India	CERD/C/299/Add.3	CERD/C/304/Add.13
Malta	CERD/C/262/Add.4	CERD/C/304/Add.14
Mauritius	CERD/C/280/Add.2	CERD/C/304/Add.19
Namibia	CERD/C/275/Add.1	CERD/C/304/Add.16
People's Republic of China	CERD/C/275/Add.2	CERD/C/304/Add.15
Republic of Korea	CERD/C/258/Add.2	CERD/C/304/Add.12
Venezuela	CERD/C/263/Add.8/ Rev.1	CERD/C/304/Add.17
Zaire	CERD/C/237/Add.2 CERD/C/278/Add.1	CERD/C/304/Add.18

D. Committee against Torture (*17th session, November 1996*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Algeria	CAT/C/25/Add.8	A/52/44, paras. 70-80
Georgia	CAT/C/28/Add.1	A/52/44, paras. 111-121
Poland	CAT/C/25/Add.9	A/52/44. paras. 95-110
Republic of Korea	CAT/C/32/Add.1	A/52/44, paras. 44-69
Russian Federation	CAT/C/17/Add.15	A/52/44, paras. 31-43
Uruguay	CAT/C/17/Add.16	A/52/44, paras. 81-94

E. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (*16th session, January 1997*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Canada	CEDAW/C/CAN/4	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 316-343
Denmark	CEDAW/C/DEN/3	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 254-274
Morocco	CEDAW/C/MOR/1	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 51-80
Philippines	CEDAW/C/PHI/3	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 282-305
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	CEDAW/C/STV/1-3 and Add.1	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 130-150
Slovenia	CEDAW/C/SVN/1	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 88-122
Turkey	CEDAW/C/TUR/2	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 160-206
Venezuela	CEDAW/C/VEN/3	A/52/38/Rev.1, paras. 217-247

F. Committee on the Rights of the Child (*14th session, January 1997/13th session, October 1996*)

State party	State party report	Concluding observations
Bulgaria	CRC/C/8/Add.29	CRC/C/15/Add.66
Ethiopia	CRC/C/8/Add.27	CRC/C/15/Add.67
Mauritius	CRC/C/3/Add.36	CRC/C/15/Add.64
Morocco	CRC/C/28/Add.1	CRC/C/15/Add.60
Myanmar	CRC/C/8/Add.9	CRC/C/15/Add.69
New Zealand	CRC/C/28/Add.3	CRC/C/15/Add.71
Nigeria	CRC/C/8/Add.26	CRC/C/15/Add.61
Panama	CRC/C/8/Add.28	CRC/C/15/Add.68
Slovenia	CRC/C/8/Add.25	CRC/C/15/Add.65
Syrian Arab Republic	CRC/C/28/Add.2	CRC/C/15/Add.70
United Kingdom (Hong Kong)	CRC/C/11/Add.9 and Add.15	CRC/C/15/Add.63
Uruguay	CRC/C/3/Add.37	CRC/C/15/Add.62

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